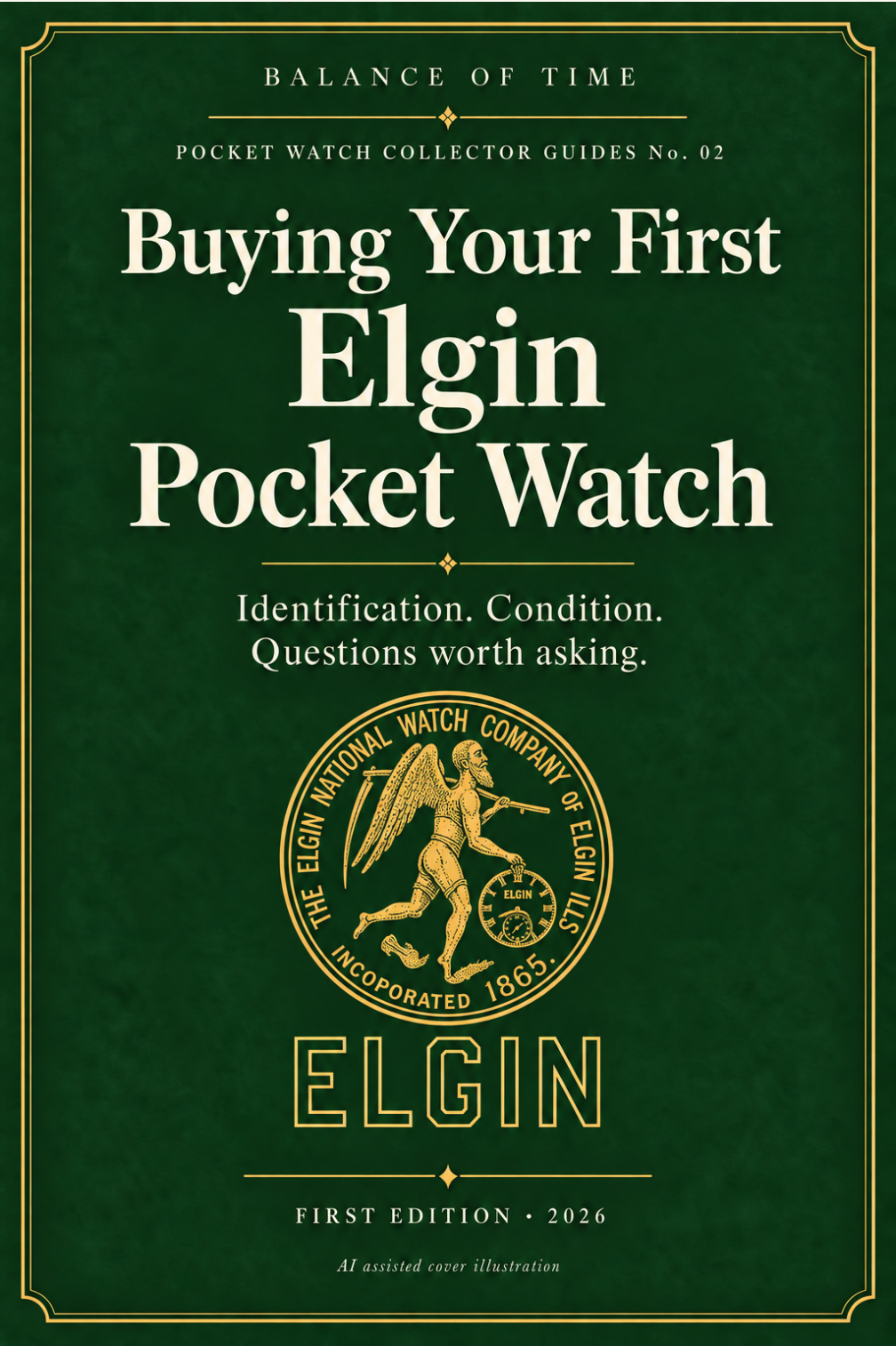
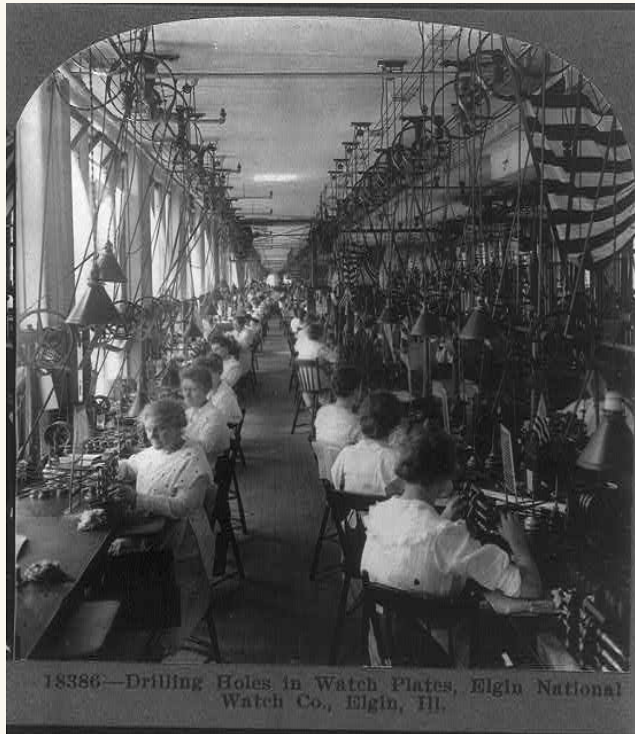




FREE PREVIEW • HISTORY, BUYING TIPS & WORKBOOK

The hands behind the timekeeper



Women drilling holes in watch plates at Elgin, Illinois. Keystone View Company, December 1917. Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-55952. The complete supplied image is retained.

In *Three Visits to America*, published in 1884, Emily Faithfull describes visiting Elgin's factory that March. Women at the factory presented her with a watch and a letter calling it a "token of regard and good wishes." It brings the story down from executives and buildings to the people making the watches.

The photograph is a separate record, more than three decades later. Its catalog identifies the work as drilling watch plates. We do not know the women's names from this record. Their individual biographies should not be invented.

Before you pay, ask for evidence

1. Request five clear views.

Ask for the dial straight on, the full movement, readable movement serial and markings, case interior marks, and the case exterior with hinges, bow and closed covers. More than five photographs may be needed.

2. Identify the movement, not just the case.

Record the movement serial number. A case number is not a substitute. Use an identification source such as Pocket Watch Database, then compare its result with the actual size, markings and configuration. A lookup is not proof of originality.

3. Ask about condition and service.

Does it wind and set normally? How long does it run? Is there a dated service invoice? What has been replaced, repaired or refinished? Do the covers close securely? Agree return terms before paying.

4. Protect the watch and your budget.

Do not ask an inexperienced seller to dismantle it. Include shipping, taxes, fees, inspection, service, known parts and a contingency in your budget. Running is not the same as recently serviced.

When to pause.

An unreadable movement number, obscured damage or contradictory descriptions need clarification. A bargain that cannot be identified is not yet a bargain.

Identify your candidate

Elgin Pocket Watch | Use one saved copy for each watch

Electronic: save a copy with a new name before entering details. Use a PDF app that supports form fields, save, then close and reopen to check your entries. Keep answers concise; attach extra notes separately. Printable: write by hand. Both versions print on Letter or A4 using Fit. Unknown is a valid answer.

Your record name or number	Record date
<hr/>	<hr/>

Listing URL, seller, or auction reference

Movement serial	Movement size and model
<hr/>	<hr/>

Grade and jewel count	Reported setting and configuration
<hr/>	<hr/>

Case maker, number, and exact material wording

Identification source, access date, and estimated period

What is not yet identified?

Explore the complete guide

If you enjoy the history but also want a more methodical way to buy, the complete Elgin bundle brings both together.

\$12 USD

27 page illustrated collector guide

Six page printable workbook

Six page fillable workbook for use in a compatible PDF app

The guide begins with company history, people and factories, then covers identification, collecting tiers, originality, condition and buying cautions. This preview is a selection, not the complete guide or workbook.

[View the Elgin guide bundle](#)

Sources and image notes

Library of Congress: 1917 workers photograph. Catalog advisory: “No known restrictions on publication.” Dated publication supports a United States public domain basis, not a worldwide guarantee.

Emily Faithfull, Three Visits to America, 1884, pp. 310–311.

Pocket Watch Database: movement identification reference.

The approved cover is an AI assisted decorative treatment of historical Elgin trademarks, not a historical photograph. Independent publication, not affiliated with or endorsed by Elgin or a trademark owner. No historical photograph in this preview is AI generated.